JOHN ENGLISHMAN,

In Defence of the Engliſh Conſtitution.

Friday, May 30, 1755. Number VI.

A Continuation of the Piece, publiſhed in JOHN ENGLISHMAN, N°. 5.

THIS Paper begins with the Speech of an old Gentleman, who being alarmed at what the Captain had ſaid, was reſolved to anſwer him. The old Gentleman is one that will not go within a Church, during the Time of Divine Service, upon any Account, tho' he frequents the Meetings of the Sectaries occaſionally; is of great Note among his own People, and in the Main is a Man of good Character; but having the *Watch Tower* in great Admiration, he could not bear to hear it ſuggeſted, that, that Author had latent Deſigns to the Prejudice of all Religion: Riſing up and ſteping forward, he thus accoſted the Captain in an angry Tone; I would have you to know, Sir, We are not ſuch a ſort of People as to countenance thoſe that would deſtroy Religion. I cannot bear to hear thoſe *very worthy* and *pious* Gentlemen, the Authors of the *Independent Reflector*, and *Watch Tower*, ſo traduced; for I make no doubt but that they are, pious Souls! truly *Converted* and *Regenerate Men*.

They write, I conceive for the Honour of God, and in the Defence of Liberty; and are reſolved to lay open a moſt *miſchievous* and *villainous* Plot, and detect a corrupt Deſign to inſlave the Country by a *poor, pitiful, paltry, party, Dunce Ridden, Prieſt Ridden* Church College, as they elegantly ſpeak. But theſe diſcerning Men with their Eagle Eyes, have penetrated the deep Deſign, and have offered themſelves to aid *the Lord againſt the Mighty*. They have made themſelves as famous in *New-York*, as *Brutus* was at *Rome*, *Hamden* in *England*; or -------- and ------ at *New-York*; and have effectually proved, (except to thoſe that are blind with Prejudice) that we have no ſort of Religious Eſtabliſhment in this Colony, by virtue of the Acts either of Uniformity, or Union, or any other Act of Parliament that is, or can be made; and that the word *Territories* has no Relation to the Plantations; and have ſtrengthened their prevailing Arguments with the Opinion of a Lawyer and Divine of the greateſt Note.

And in order to alarm the Members of the Church of *Holland* in this Colony, they have genteely ridiculed the Notion of a Siſterly Relation between their Church, and the Church of *England*; and undeniably proved, that if Siſters happen to differ or diſpute about Trifles, or do not quite agree, which is the handſomeſt, it abſolutely diſſolves all Siſterly Relation. And by a fair Conſequence, (which we hope every *Dutchman* in the Province will be able to draw) they have further proved, that they ought to flock over to us in Multitudes, in order to preſerve their own Principles, and to ſtrengthen our Party, which we ſhall effectually do, can we but once get the Revenue of the *Dutch* Church joined with ours: And the better to reconcile them to this Concluſion, it has been propoſed by ſome of our faſt Friends amongſt them, to try to move them, by a moſt pathetick Addreſs, (eſpecially as their Youth begin to loſe the Purity of the *Dutch* Language) to admit *Engliſh*, *Scotch*, and *Iriſh* Miniſters into their Church, to prevent their wandering, which we preſume will eaſily obtain, ſince there is a near Siſterly Relation between the *Engliſh* Independents, and the *Dutch* Church; both being *Calviniſtical*.

The old Gentleman here pauſed, for ſome conſiderable Time, and then went on, expatiating largely upon the Performances of the *Independent Reflector*, and *the Watch Tower*; and concluded with wiſhing that every Perſon in the Government would read thoſe Papers, which would inſpire them with Spirit and Reſolution to ſtand up in Defence of our glorious Privileges.

After a profound Silence for ſome Time, a young Gentleman, Member of the *Dutch* Church, who had been brought up in the Neighbourhood of the *Engliſh*, and particularly of the Independents, with Reſpect enough to the old Gentleman, told him, that he would not undertake to ſay, what he had obſerved in general was not right; but hoped it would give him no Offence, if he diſſented from him in his Opinion of the Siſterly Relations between the *Engliſh* Diſſenters, and the Church of *Holland*.

For, ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to the Company; We of the *Dutch* Church conſider ourſelves as a Branch of the Eſtabliſhed Church of *Holland*; we Honor the Eſtabliſhment of our Religion; and all other Religious Eſtabliſhments, not contrary to the Holy Scriptures: Whereas the *Engliſh* Diſſenters in general, and the Author or Authors of the *Independent Reflector*, and *Watch Tower* in particular, have of late labored hard to overſet all Religious Eſtabliſhments whatſoever, and to ſhow *the Abſurdity of the Civil Magiſtrates interfering in Matters of Religion:* A Doctrine this directly repugnant to the Holy Scriptures, to the Senſe of the Primitive Churches, and particularly to that of the Church of the United Provinces; who in the 36th Article of Her Confeſſion of Faith, concerning the Authority of the Magiſtrate, ſaith * "That their Office is not only to take "heed unto, and to watch over politic Affairs; but alſo to "maintain the Holy Eccleſiaſtical Service, to hinder and "extirpate all Idolatry, and falſe Worſhip, to throw down "the Kingdom of Antichriſt, and to exalt the Kingdom of "Jeſus Chriſt, and take care that the Goſpel be preached "every where, that ſo God may be honoured and ſerved "by every One, as he has commanded in his Word."

The *Engliſh* Diſſenters do alſo hold all pre-compoſed Forms of Prayer to be unedifying, tending to quench the Spirit, and therefore unlawful, eſpecially if impoſed, that is, enjoined to be uſed by the Authority of the Church, or Civil Magiſtrate; as they alſo do the Obſervation of any Aniverſary Faſts, or Feſtivals. In theſe Things they differ from and condemn the Practice of the Primitive Church and all other Proteſtant Churches. Of whom the learned and famous *Ludovicus Capellus*, (Miniſter, Divinity Reader, and Profeſſor

* *Engliſh Tranſlation.*

Profeſſor of Hebrew at *Saumur*) ſays, * " When the Sepa-
" ration was made from the Church of *Rome*, the ſacred
" Liturgy was purged of all that Popiſh Superſtition and
" Idolatry, and all ſuch Things as did contribute but little
" or nothing to the Edification of the Church: And there
" were framed and preſcribed, in ſeveral Places, divers ſet
" Forms of Holy Liturgies, by the ſeveral Authors of the
" Reformation in *Germany*, *France*, *England*, and *Scotland*,
" and the *Netherlands*, &c. differing as little as poſſible
" from the ancient Set-Forms of the primitive Church:
" Which ſet Forms the Reformed have hitherto uſed with
" Happineſs and Profit, each of them in their ſeveral Nations
" and Diſtricts: Till at laſt, of very late, there did ariſe
" in *England*, a froward, ſcrupulous, and over nice (that
" I ſay not altogether ſuperſtitious) Generation of Men,
" unto whom it hath ſeemed good for many Reaſons, but
" thoſe very light, and of no Moment at all, not only to
" blame, but to caſhier, and aboliſh the Liturgy uſed
" hitherto in their Church, together with the whole Hierar-
" chical Government of their Biſhops." How contrary this was to the Opinion of the *French* Church, to that of the Great *Calvin*, to the Church of *Holland*, will be evident to any one that reads the learned and eloquent Mr. *Martel*, Miniſter of *Mount Alban*, and Divinity Reader in the Univerſity, in a Letter to Mr. *Durell*, wherein are theſe Words. " I wonder to hear that ſome are found in *England*, that
" are altogether averſe to any ſet Form of Liturgy to be
" obſerved, one, and the ſame, in all the Kingdom. Among
" us it is no where permitted to reject the uſe of that Liturgy
" that was made by *Calvin*." And this is perfectly conformable to the Judgment of *Calvin* himſelf, who in his Letter to the Duke of *Somerſet*, Lord Protector in the Minority of King *Edward* the Sixth, has theſe Words, " As touching the Forms of Prayers and Ceremonies of the
" Church, I approve very much that it be ſet, and that it
" be not lawful of the Miniſter to recede from it in his
" Function." Now as to the Church of *Holland* it is well known that ſhe has a ſet Form or Liturgy eſtabliſhed by the Synod of *Dort*, wherein are contain'd the public Service for Sunday's, and Week Days; an Office for Infant and Adult Baptiſm; for the Adminiſtration of the Lords Supper; for the Solemnization of Matrimony, Viſitation of the Sick, Confirmation of Miniſters, Elders and Deacons, and for Excommunication, and the receiving of Penitents to Communion again. And as to thoſe Feſtivals which have often been by *Engliſh* Diſſenters branded with opprobrious Epithets of Popiſh and Superſtitious, particularly by the Author of the late *Independent Reflector*, we have them enjoined by the Synod of *Dort*'s 67 Article. Nor do I know one Foreign Proteſtant Church without her Liturgy, and the Obſervation of theſe Feſtivals.----As to the Government and Diſcipline of our Church, it muſt be confeſſed that we differ in ſome reſpects from the Church of *England*, but much more from the Independents: And I am perſuaded that our differing in a ſmall Degree from the former, was occaſioned not by Choice, but Neceſſity. This affair in my Judgment has been ſet in a juſt Light by *John Engliſhman* in his Notion of Sifter Churches, which has never been honored with that Anſwer the *Watch Tower* promiſed. For as for the pretended Member of the *Dutch* Church, who ſubſcribes himſelf *Dordracenſis*, he evidently proves himſelf to be unacquainted with the Sentiments of our moſt eminent Men. *Calvin* and *Beza* will teach him, that they entertained far different Sentiments of the *Engliſh* Hierarchy, than what he inſinuates; which may be ſeen in *J. E*'s. before cited Piece; and I am perſuaded this *Dordracenſis* would have met with the ſame Reward that Mr. *Coignart* did from the Synod of the Proteſtant Church of *France*, who had a Cenſure publickly paſſed upon a Book he publiſhed, otherwiſe valuable, only for ſome indecent Expreſſions againſt the Reformation of the Church of *England*; and was upon the ſame Account denied the Sum of Money he was to have received for defraying the Charge of printing it. This happened in the Year 1657, when the Church of *England* did, as it were lie dead, and buried, and in the Opinion of moſt Men, almoſt out of Hope of a Reſurrection. Were I not afraid to tire your Patience I could convince you from the Writings of great Numbers of the moſt eminent Men in the Churches, ſubject to the Conſtitutions of *Dort*, That the Church of *England* has been always eſteemed a moſt ſound Part of the Catholic Church, and her Communion refuſed by none. I could not but ſmile, (tho' I was a little grieved at the ſame Time) to obſerve one of Mr. *Dordracenſis*'s Arguments to convince the *Dutch* Readers, that there could be no Sifterly Relation between us, and the Church of *England*, *viz*, " Becauſe, (ſays he)
" our Reverend Miniſters in *New-York*, do conſtantly every
" Year in handling the *Heidelbergh* Catechiſm condemn the
" Hierarchy, &c. after the Manner of the Church of *Rome*."
And ſo have I often heard the Church of *England* Miniſters do the ſame. But ſurely their condemning thoſe Things as practiced at *Rome*, cannot effect their Sifterly Relation with *England*. There is one Quotation more Gentlemen, that I beg leave to repeat, it being ſo much to the Purpoſe, that I am ſure you will not be tired with hearing of it. Looking over the famous *Beza* the other Day, I caſt my Eye upon a Letter wrote by him to Archbiſhop *Whitgift*, publiſhed in his Grace's Life by Sir *George Paul*; printed by *Thomas Snodham*, *London* 1612, containing theſe Words,
" In my Writings touching Church Government I ever
" impugned the *Romiſh* Hierarchy, but never intended to
" touch, or impugn the Eccleſiaſtical Polity of the Church
" of *England*, nor to exact of you to frame yourſelves, or
" your Church, to the Pattern of our Diſcipline.----I wiſh
" and hope that the ſacred and holy College of your Biſhops
" will continue for ever, *&c.*

I have but a few Words to add Gentlemen, and I will trouble your Patience no longer; and they are with regard to the Bill publiſhed by order of the Honourable Aſſembly, as a Scheme or Model for a College. I have converſed upon it with ſundry of my Neighbours, of various Denominations; and I have never yet met with any Man that liked it; every one thinks it Chimerical, and ſome venture to ſuppoſe the Author never expected or deſired it ſhould paſs into an Act. For my own Part, I do ſincerely believe it was done with a ſingle View to embarraſs the Affair, and to divert the Appropriation of the Monies raiſed by the ſeveral late Lotteries to the Uſe of the Charter College.

After reading this famous Bill, the following Queries naturally occurred to me, with which I conclude.

Query I. Whether a Motion to bar Religion being taught in the College, doth not proceed from a Spirit of Deiſm and Scepticiſm; directly tending to the utter Subverſion of the Chriſtian Syſtem?

Q. II. Whether it be poſſible to teach Morality with any Succeſs, and enforce its Obligations upon the Conſcience, but upon Religious Principles? And,

Q. III. Whether it will be expedient for this Colony to eſtabliſh a Seminary of Learning, where the ſlighteſt Obligations to teach and enforce Morality are not enjoined?

Here the young Gentleman made an Apology for intruding upon the Company's Patience; and the Evening being ſpent, the Company broke up, after appointing a ſecond Meeting at the ſame Place, and after ordering me to tranſmit to you the Subſtance of their Converſation; and ſhould we again meet, you may then expect to hear further from your *Unknown Friend*,

AGRICOLA.

* *Theſ Salem de Liturg. part* 3.

N. B. *Maſter* Dordracenſis *may expect an anſwer to his* puerile, feeble *performance next Week. If he would be adviſed, he had better employ himſelf in proſecuting his Studies in Divinity, and not meddle with Diſputes; otherwiſe he will never be able to commence an* Engliſh Preacher *in the* Dutch *Church, in this City.*

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